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ESSAY

ON THE

CONTRARIETIES

OF

PUBLICK VIRTUE.

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SOCIETY, like Thong of Leather,
Faſt binds in Cluſters Men together;
And tho' it cannot be forgotten,
That ſome are ripe, and ſome are rotten,
Yet, — let it ſtill be underſtood,
They *All* promote the *General Good*.
For this the *Patriot*'s Fire ariſes,
That glows at every trying Criſis,
With each inferior Strife, and Stir too: —
Whence ſpring they? but from *Publick Virtue*.

Tho' different Plans, like Streams, 'tis true
By different Rills their Courſe purſue;
Tho' oft they ſeem, to Mortals blind,
Repugnant to the End deſign'd,
Appearing, as by Error led,
To flow thro' many a mazy Bed;
Yet ſtill at length we ſee them glide,
Meand'ring to the common Tide.

Smile on, Ye Grave, in deep Deriſion,
I ſhrink not from my Propoſition,
But bold aver *All Britons* merit,
The Praiſe of *Patriotick Spirit*;
As far as e'er their Power can ſtreteh,
From N—— deſcending down to *Ketch*.

That

That Stateſmen guard the publick Weal,
We *All* muſt own, for *All* muſt feel:
'Tis their's to watch with Ardor keen,
And careful drive the grand Machine;
To charm the Paſſengers from fretting,
And keep the *Whole* from overſetting.
But ſtill inferior Hands may bring
Some little Help, — may oil a Spring, —
May point, — "There, round that Corner turn Ye,"
And wiſh the Folks a pleaſant Journey.

All have their Uſe, — there's nothing plainer,
From this each Traveller's a Gainer;
And, tho' the Merits be but few,
Let's give to every Imp his Due.

This

This ſocial *Fire* tho' all poſſeſs,
In ſome there's nothing *blazer* leſs;
So many a cloſe Attempt is made,
O'er the bright Flame to hold a Shade,
To keep their Worth from being known,
While Conſcience hugs itſelf alone:
As ſome of Alms will never boaſt,
And look *leaſt* pleas'd when giving *moſt*.

But, Cynicks, ſpare the odd Behaviour,
If well you walk, ne'er blame the Paviour.
Should you, when wand'ring in the Night,
Some *Scoundrel* urge to ſet you right,
Now, tho' he blaſts you with a Curſe,
You'll take the *Better* for the *Worſe*,

Nor

Nor think the Greeting ill-beſtow'd,
If while he *damns* he ſhews the *Road*;
But ſtrait jog home, no more affrighted,
Than if an honeſt *Watchman* lighted.

Learn then the *Beſt* to cull from *Evil*,
As *Saints* take Warning by the *Devil*:
And,—if the Muſe, whoſe Judgement nice is,
Shews *Publick Good* in *private Vices*,
The holieſt Tongue muſt ceaſe to ſtir,
But inſtant own without Demur,
While modeſt Matrons ſtart at *Drury*,
The *Thief*'s as uſeful as the *Jury*,
Since Both the Mind ſtrong Truths impreſs on,
And teach the World an awful Leſſon.

Our

Our *various Patriots* then revere,
Their Hearts are ſound, tho' Manners queer:
Tho' ſome to outward Viſion ſeem
To ſport in *Phrenzy*'s antick Dream,
The Aims of each laborious Self are,
Intended for — the *Publick Welfare.*
This glorious End alone purſuing,
They, bold like *Curtius*, laugh at Ruin; —
For this, if we their Schemes unravel,
They drink, whore, mortgage, game, and travel.

Enthuſiaſt in the Paths of *Science*,
Banks bade the ſtormy Waves Defiance;
Fair Nature's Volume to explore,
He* *fought with Seas* unſail'd before,

And

* With ſuch mad Seas the daring GAMA fought. THOMSON.

And earn'd, by *Argonautick* Toil,
Freſh Honours for his native Soil:
Him *Wiſdom* lov'd, thus worthy found,
And *Britain* hail'd him as ſhe *crown'd*.

But ſay, "Can *One Adventʼrer's* Claim,
"Exhauſt the Trumpet Voice of Fame?
"No Garland has my Country now,
"To bind another Pilgrim's Brow?
"Be mine the Merit, — *Florio* cries,
And croſs the *Channel* gaily flies;
Thro' thick and thin drives mad and giddy on,
Now here, now there, now in Meridian;
(Unleſs perchance when *Louis* fail,) —
A *Meteor* — with a fiery Tail.

Think you his Aim in each Machine,
Is but to ſcare th' unfurniſh'd *Louvre*?
Ah no! 'bout all the Diſſipation
He loves the Intereſt of his Nation,
And, mindful of the Patriot Rule,
For our *Inſtruction* — plays the *Fool*.

Connubial Faith, — th' unbroken Vow, —
How bleſt! Who dares to diſallow?
Lotharia ſtrong in this agrees,
And — urges every Wife he ſees;
Sure — if the Attack ſhould fail upon her,
The Sex is happy in her Honour, —
And, — if his Stratagems ſurprize her,
Her Fall may make th' Unſteady wiſer.

The Husband from his Doze may start,
And, tho' he long disdain'd her *Heart*,
May look the Thief with Visage fierce on,
Who dared defile the slighted *Person*.
" Draw — draw to set the Matter right,"—
But is *Lothario* wrong to fight?
No, — *Publick Virtue* swells his Veins,
Whoever falls, — his Country gains!
This none can doubt, Your Feelings ask, all;
For 'tis a *Gain* to lose a *Rascal*.

When Trade unclogg'd can turn its Wheels,
The Influence kind the Kingdom feels;
Each Hand, in fit Degree and Measure,
Contributes to the *Publick Treasure*.

These Truths *Northumberland* convince,
Who lives in juſt Magnificence,
And, — while his Bounty wide diſtills,
For *England's Welfare* — pays his Bills.

But different Notions *Cotta* ſtrikes,
For why ſhou'd *Patriots* judge alike?
It ſhocks his Greatneſs to deſcribe
How Peaſants gall the Courtier's Kibe,
An upſtart Race, that *No one* knows,
Who yet have Folly to ſuppoſe,
That *Honeſt Wealth* is better far
Than *Guilt* and *Want* beneath a *Star*.
"Let every Man preſerve his Station;
"What's Rule — without Subordination"?

'Till wiſer Heads confeſs the Flaw,
And plan a ſumptuary Law,
Impatient ſome Redreſs to get,
See *Cotta* plunges into Debt,
(From Bailiffs ſafe) — and ſtrong commends
This Practice to his hungry Friends:
So War is waged with every Trader,
Dear Honour! leſt the Rogues degrade her:
And what Contrivance is more ſure
To *humble*, — than to keep them *poor*?

When in Contention ſharp of old,
As legendary Tales unfold,
Two * Rival Deities deſign'd
Their choiceſt Preſents to Mankind,

With

* Minerva and Neptune.

With Envy kindling, — warm Enforcer!
This gave an *Olive*, that a *Courſer*.

Thus ſome,—as other Plans have miſt'em,
Revere the *Vegetable Syſtem*,
And think their *Virtue* grounded ſure
In Growth of Timber, and — Manure.
Hence, up the Slope Plantations ſpread,
And crown the Hill's once dreary Head;
Hence, downward as the Vale deſcends,
The Harveſt-Ocean wide extends;
Glad *Britain* — how theſe Proſpects charm her!
Her *Medal** decks the *Patriot Farmer*,
Who counts his Stock, — and hopes he's ſhewn,
His Country's Riches in his own.

* Medals given by the Society for the encouraging Arts and Sciences.

Not

Not ſo the 'Squire of boiſt'rous Spirit,
Who, ſtudious of Equeſtrian Merit,
To thrifty Care makes no Pretences,
But ſcours the Fields, and breaks the Fences.
Vain may the Tenant urge his Speeches,
New till the Land, and mend the Breaches,
Yet no Reſtraint this Landlord clogs;
Devoted as a *Prey* to *Dogs*,
He hates ignoble frugal Ways,
And — wild in the Career of Praiſe
Cries, as he ſpurs his foaming Steed;
"To *Me Old England* owes the Breed."

Do various Loads the Nation preſs?
'Tis noble ſure to make them leſs:

This

This *Vigil* does, and labours hard
To cog the *Die*, or palm the *Card*!
Profuſe in *Packs*, as round they lie,
He often turns th' applauding Eye; —
And, — tho' he cheats, thinks nothing of it,
Since his dear Country ſhares the Profit.
Keen Cenſure then her Frown relaxes,
Without *Conſumption* what are *Taxes*?

Taxes! But "why", *Therſites* growls,
"Muſt every Bird be ſtripp'd by Owls?
"Shall two or three, in pamper'd Eaſe,
"Lay Contributions as they pleaſe,
"While all the reſt, in Station humble,
"Tame bear the Loſs, — nor dare to grumble"?

Peace,

Peace, Snarler, — Know, with ſteady Soul
The *Patriot* can applaud the whole;
And juſtly crowns with equal Praiſe
The Man who *levies*, and who *pays*.

'Tis true, the Doctor of Finances
By *Noſtrums* oft his Fund enhances:
But then his Skill in Phyſick's great,
He knows the Ailments of the State,
Intent, as ſuits the ſad Diſaſter,
To cup, prick, purge, or ſpread a Plaiſter.
A *Plethora*'s now the Caſe, there's needing
Strict Regimen, and copious Bleeding.
He therefore acts the Subject beſt,
Who ſcorns the Order to conteſt;

But claps a calm contented Face on,
And yields the moſt to fill the Baſon.

To give his Part, thro' various Stages
The *Manufacturer* engages;
And thinks there's Merit at *his* Door,
Whoſe Buſineſs feeds the lab'ring *Poor*,
While to the keen *Exciſeman*'s Eyes
Accumulating *Duties* riſe.

"Curſe on the Drudge's dirty Toil,"
Exclaims my haughty Lord of Soil,
(Tho' oft his Title-Deeds may reſt
Safe in the Us'rer's Iron-Cheſt;)
"Unpaid let other Calls remain,
"I'll ſtill uphold my *Menial Train*,

"Oeco-

" Oeconomy!— 'tis baſe to court her,
" Each * *Footman* is a State-Supporter,
" To baulk the Cauſe a Coward's Sin is,
" I'll bravely pay the *Hundred Guineas.*"

Deep *Bibo* ſoaks, and boaſts the Reaſon,
" Wine's the beſt Antidote to *Treaſon*,
" Our Bumpers *large Revenues* bring,
" I drink my *Claret* for my *King.*"
Yet ſtill *his* Zeal by far ſurpaſſes,
Who empties firſt, then breaks the *Glaſſes*†.

How *Fungus* glows with Patriot Pride;
While *Credit* pours an even Tide!
Thus buoy'd along, thro' Fairy Scenes,
He clubs his Share to *Ways and Means*;

At

* New Tax on Servants. †Ditto on Glaſs Wares.

At length the *Dun*'s inceſſant Clamour
Dooms every Chattel to the *Hammer*;
Still there's *Decorum* in his Fall,
Since now the * *Auction* cloſes all.

Smile, *Walpole's Ghoſt*, untaught to feign,
For *private Folly*'s *publick Gain*:
And bid *Old Cecil* ſmooth his Brow,—
If *England thrives*, — no matter *How*.

Veſpatian thus, the Bee of Money,
From every Weed could gather Honey:
Tho' ſqueamiſh *Titus* leer'd and laugh'd,
The wiſer Father bleſt the Craft,
And, when his *Bags* the *Caſh* was ſure in,
Ne'er thought the *Tribute* ſmelt of *Urine*.

* Tax on Auctions.

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